

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

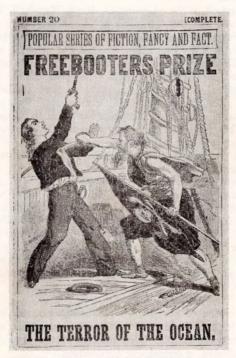
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William Wallace Cook—The Marshall Years

By Prof. Mabel R. Skjelver



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 190

POPULAR SERIES OF FICTION FANCY AND FACT

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William Wallace Cook-The Marshall Years

By Mabel Cooper Skjelver

The writings of William Wallace Cook after 1910 are difficult to identify due to the many pseudonyms employed. However, some clues have been located in his personal effects. An autobiographical account on his writing career was published in 1912. This book, The Fiction Factory, recounts his writing activities up to 1911. Perhaps some of the information recently located may furnish clues for collectors. The Conde Nast Publications, Inc., now owners of the Street and Smith archives, supplied some information.

Stanley A. Pachon's article in the September 1957 Dime Novel Roundup provided a background of Cook's writings and identified many of the pseudonyms under which Cook wrote.² A brief recount of Cook's activities from 1900 to 1910 is necessary to bring into perspective the material found at Marshall, Michigan, and in the old Street and Smith records which relate to

the years after 1910.

The Cooks returned to the place of his birth, Marshall, Michigan, in 1900, bought an "old place and settled down." Somewhat recovered from a severe illness, Cook sought a location that would be more beneficial to his health. Nonetheless, despite health limitations, he was a prolific writer during his Marshall years. While he recounts his "fiction factory" output in the autobiographical account, he carefully disguises his connection with the New York publishing firm, Street and Smith, then the largest publisher of pulps for youth and adults. Why he did so remains a puzzle. One can speculate that the social and cultural climate of Marshall lead him to think that it would be best not to stress his pulp literature connections. He states that The Fiction Factory was written under a pseudonym upon the advise of an editor friend. At Christmas time in 1910, he was reflecting on his life production and considering a more serious work, when a noted editor friend suggested that he relate his experiences as an author, thinking that other writers would find such a book of interest.3 Cook accepted the suggestion of a pseudonym for his book about his fiction factory, but began considering a handbook of some type to turn his "gift of plot and counter-plot" to the aid of others.

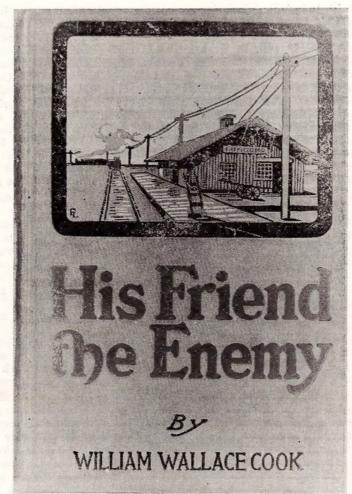
The fiction of William Wallace Cook by his own admission was one of clean ethics. In a newspaper interview he contended he never wrote a line in his stories, but what he would permit his own son to read, feeling secure that the reading would do no harm, but would, on the other hand, be bene-

ficial to the boy.4

*This "old place" is one of the elegant nineteenth century homes of Marshall, Michigan, having been built in 1869 in the Italiante Villa style by Frederick Karstaedt, a clothing merchant. Cook purchased the property from descendants of Deville Hubbard, a prominent landowner.

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Cover of "His Friend the Enemy." William Wallace Cook's first book. G. W. Dillingham, 1903.

During his 33 years in Marshall, Cook acquired many friends. He liked to stop to visit with friends at an auto sales and repair shop on his daily trips to the post office. He participated in many local functions and organizations. He was a faithful attendant to the Marshall Rotary Club and a member of the Presbyterian Church, a Knight Templar, and the Mystic Shrine. He enjoyed family and social gathering and was a fascinating story teller at these occasions. His generosity was relied upon by his family, friends and colleagues for assistance in time of need or emergencies. He was a member of the Marshall City Commission that was appointed to revise the original city charter in 1923. He took great pride in his appointment as a member of the Marshall Electric Light and Water Commission. Although most of his relatives were Republicans, he supported the Democratic political party. He was an active member of the Michigan Author's Association, the Chicago Press Club and the Battle Creek Writer's Club.

Ill health had plagued Cook for some years prior to his residency in Marshall, Michigan. On the doctor's advise to seek a drier climate, the Cooks left Chicago to live in Arizona. His year in the west provided much of the background for Cook's western stories in later years. Somewhat improved in health the Cook's returned to live in Chicago. He was able to continue his arrangement with Street and Smith writing for the New York Five-Cent Library, Do and Dare and the Klondike Kit Library. The juvenile weekly, Do and Dare, featured "Phil Rushington" as the hero. It changed to reprintings of earlier S&S publications after 47 issues. William Wallace Cook can be credited with many of the stories of Phil and the circus. The stories were written under the name Stanley Norris. According to Reynolds the Do and Dare publication was a pallid copy of the Frank Merriwell series, but failed to be competitive, although Phil had adventurous activities that outdid Merriwell. He went to Springvale Academy, joined a circus, and went on the stage.

As his health improved, Cook sought other publishers for his work; the Western World published two serials. One a mystery story that the editors planned to use to boom circulation. The Argosy purchased a novelette that Cook had written earlier during his illness. On the proceeds of this the Cooks took an excursion to Atlantic City, New York, Boston, Salem, Plymouth and other places in the New England States. Cook devoted his mornings to writing and his afternoons to sightseeing. In August, 1900, they went west to Michigan from the New England excursion to visit relatives; then on to Wisconsin in search of a permanent residence. They returned to Marshall, Michigan, his birthplace, purchased property in 1901 with plans that this location be his permanent writing headquarters. His income was now large enough to acquire property and he felt secure in his dealings with the New York publisher to locate outside a metropolitan area. Marshall appeared to be an ideal location as mail communication or rail travel to Chicago or New York was a matter of a half-day or a day's time via the Michigan Central Railroad.

His first year in Marshall was a banner year financially. The McClure syndicate bought one of Cook's serials, issued it to a metropolitan newspaper, who in turn issued it a "patent" to be published in rural newspapers. He continued writing stories for Street and Smith's New York Weekly and a new boy's serial, Boys of America. He was requested to revise and lengthen 10 old stories and write new stories for the New York Weekly at a rate of one a week. Yet by August the stories submitted were shortened by his publishers and the remuneration reduced; a not unusual occurance when a library was in financial difficulty.

The next two years were productive for Cook in his fiction factory. He continued with both juvenile serials and detective stories for the New York Weekly. However, he was notified at the close of 1902 that the publisher did not require any further material for the weekly. He then gave his attention to preparing three serials for the Argosy and other short stories. In the Spring of 1903, Street and Smith requested new material for their publications. He produced 42 of these during the year. The story, "His Friend the Enemy," purchased by S. S. McClure in 1900, was published by G. W. Dillingham as a hardback book that year. The title page of this book noted that Cook was also the author of "Rogers of Butte" and "Little Miss Vassar." The story was illustrated by Frederick Lowenheim. The locale, the Dakota Territory in 1885, provided the background for the contest between two new prairie settlements, Concord and Harmony, for the county seat. The hero's friend, but "the enemy" as well, was a young lady who also supplied a romantic interest to the tale.

In January 1904, following a visit to his New York publishers, he sold material to The Popular Magazine (a new Street and Smith publication), and The Argosy. Dodd, Mead and Company brought out Cook's second book, Wilby's Dan, in hardback that year. He also began creating stories for a new publication, Rough Riders, in which the adventures of Ted Strong, the fictional hero, was featured. Strong was one of Teddy Roosevelt's volunteers, having fought in the Philippines. The stock names of Edward C. Taylor or Ned Taylor were the pseudonyms under which Cook wrote for the Rough Riders. A short story, "Bridget's Return" appeared in the June 1904 issue of Munsey's Magazine under the name of William Wallace Whitlock.

The next year (1905), Cook submitted for Street and Smith's Buffalo Bill Stories; continued producing for the Argosy, and added the Chicago Ledger, and Woman's Home Companion to his list of outlets. In 1906 he expanded his outlets for his fiction to The Blue Book, The Red Book, The Railroad Man's Magazine, All-Story Magazine, and the People's Magazine (a new Street and Smith publication). During the following year Cook continued to find outlets in The Railroad Man's Magazine, The New York Weekly (Julia Edward stories), and The People's Magazine. A new outlet, The Ocean, accepted his fiction.

During the next two years his output was the largest so far in his career. He had to average approximately one story a week in 1908 to have produced 44 nickel-novels for Street and Smith, two novelettes for The Blue Book, four serials for the Munsey publications, and a novelette for The Peoples Magazine. A German publisher purchased and translated two of Cook's stories, raising the hope of an overseas market for his writing, which unfortunately did not develop. In the fall of 1909 Street and Smith indicated they wished to purchase the book rights of the serials Cook had written for Munsey and others. Since Cook had neglected to retain book rights on these, he made a trip to New York City to secure them, which he successfully obtained, but one-half of the royalties for the Munsey publications were to go to that company. Only seven were considered appropriate to issue in the original form, the other required lengthening and some revision. They had originally appeared in the Argosy Magazine, All-Story, Ocean, Scrap-Book, The Railroad Man's Magazine, Popular Magazine, People's Magazine, The Blue Book and Woman's Home Companion. These stories became Street and Smith's New Fiction Series (later reissued in the Adventure Library).

Cook also had a "new line of work" in the fall of 1909, writing for Street and Smith's new publication, Motor Stories. While Cook wrote 34 stories only 32 were published for this juvenile weekly was soon discontinued. The two extra stories were published in The Brave and Bold, another Street and Smith weekly. G. W. Dillingham Company brought out Cook's third hardback book, A Quarter to Four. 11 This story illustrates Cook's great variety of content, in which adventure, mystery and daring situations predominate. Robert Lorry, the hero, inherits the estate of an uncle in which the sale property is an envelope, a "small packet of paper money" and instructions in regard to the meeting of three other individuals at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, who would identiffy themselves with a phrase "A Quarter to Four." They were to have similar envelopes, then all were to go to the office of a San Francisco lawyer for further instructions. Via another envelope, directions were conveyed to charter a boat and prepare for a long cruise. Additional envelopes were to be opened at specified times once the four were at sea. Adventure, mystery and daring situations were imaginatively devised, with the personality of the individuals playing a major role. Besides the hero, there was

a complaining, older woman; a beautiful, virtuous young woman; and a treacherous, crafty young man. Each chapter was packed with excitement ending with a "cliff hanging" situation. All the while, the reader knows a treasure will be found and the hero will wed Zelda, the beautiful, virtuous young woman. In an "O Henry" type of ending, Lorry finds that his uncle is not dead but a very ill man and had used this adventurous means to get his part of an ill-gotten treasure to San Francisco and to convey the shares of his three dead comrades to their heirs without the heirs knowing of its tarnished source.

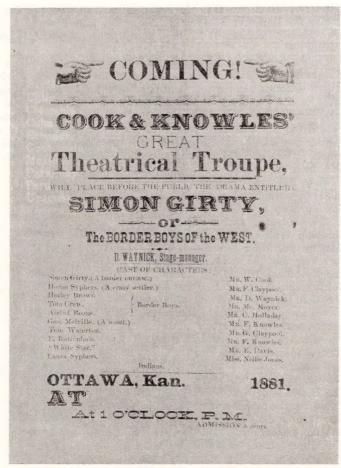
Cook's continued arrangement with Street and Smith provided a comfortable life in Marshall. Stories under his own name now began to appear. As far as it can be determined, the short story, "A Winged Victory" in the May, 1910 issue of Munsey's Magazine was the first magazine story under Cook's own name. Cook also tried his hand at writing scenarios of the company who had the contract for putting Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Pawnee Bill's Far East Show on film. He soon found that the remuneration for scenarios was small.

In 1911 Harper's Weekly published a William Wallace Cook short story, "Crenshaw of the Gold Mill." In addition to the continued assignments from Street and Smith and the Munsey publication, Cook agreed to write for Top-Notch; a new Street and Smith magazine for older boys. Cook's fictional character, Seward of Sacatone, became the main figure in the many episodes he devised for Top-Notch. Titles of William Wallace Cook's stories for Top-Notch magazine from 1911 to 1915 according to Conde Nast records of the old Street and Smith archives are as follows: 12

Title		Date
"The League of Kali"	\$150.00	8-25-1911
"Wild Dynamite"	100.00	10-20-1911
"A Motor Flight"		
"A Mardi Gras Tangle"	150.00	12-8-1911
"Tightwad"		3-15-1912
"Carlin of the Highgraders"	150.00	4-11-1913
"Ways That are Dark"	320.00	5-29-1913
"Double Crossing a Hoodoo"	200.00	7-11-1913
"Lap Orders"		4-3-1914
"The Case of Martin Brock"	145.00	4-10-1914
"The Hands of Fatima"	331,25	6-19-1914
"The Fox"	525.00	7-31-1914
"The Helping Hand"	212.50	8-21-1914
"Trail of the Golden Bighorn"		11-20-1914
(\$175.00 was charged to the	account of Med	al Library)
"Flying Gold"	450.00	12-4-1914
"The Northern Trail"	450.00	12-18-1914
"The Trail to Nowhere"	400.00	12-24-1914
"Stanley Holt, Thoroughbred"	262.50	1-15-1915
"The Scales of Fate"	387.50	1-22-1915
7 71		

Cook's account of his writing career was published in 1912. It was published under the pseudonym of John Milton Edwards. In this autobiographical account Cook goes to great lengths to disguise his connection with the world's largest publishing firm, Street and Smith. Further, he made it extremely difficult to identify the various stories in the publications for which he wrote.

Having achieved a measure of success in his writing, a personal tragedy occurred. His wife died the year following the publication of **The Fiction Factory**. Gertie Slater Cook had encouraged William Wallace to leave a



Playbill of W. W. Cook's first theatrical production, 1881.

Chicago office job to make writing a career. She was an amateur artist, having received instruction at Frank Holme's School of Illustration in Chicago. Cook's mother, Jane Elizabeth (Bull) Cook, had either been living with the Cooks or came to live with him at this time.

The Buffalo Bill Stories had provided a continued market source for William Wallace Cook since 1900. In 1912 the old Buffalo Bill Weekly ceased publication for one week, came back as the New Buffalo Bill Weekly. The exploits of Buffalo Bill enjoyed such great popularity, that Street and Smith found a way to reprint the stories, first in the Far West Library, 1907, then in the Buffalo Bill Border Stories and lastly in the Great Western Library, 1920.

Cook's writings from 1915 to 1921, when he began writing for Top-Notch again, can not be accurately documented. It was during this period that the old Ted Strong stories for the Rough Riders (1905-1907) were reprinted in the New Medal Library, 13 and the old Buffalo Bill Stories (1901-1912) were reprinted in the New Buffalo Bill Weekly. 14 Presumably during this time he was assisting the editors of Street and Smith in making suitable revisions

for the re-issue of his old stories. However in 1916 he wrote at least three mystery stories for Detective Story Magazine: "The Mill Mystery & the Box of the Seven Gods," "Randal McKinstry & the Movie Mystery," and "The

Bandaged Hand."15

A letter in support of his income in 1919 to the internal revenue list his stock of manuscripts on hand which he hoped to find a future market. At that time Cook indicated his gross earnings were \$10,707.00, but requested a "write off" of his inventory of stories that had "exhausted their value," much as a business man writes off merchandise as a loss when it is no longer saleable. He listed the following stories in his inventory and their original sale price (at 2c per word). These stories were inventoried at half value (one cent per word), since Cook still held the second American serial rights, foreign serial rights, book rights and "moving picture" rights. 16

1	A Busy Night in Chicago, 19,000 words \$190.00	\$380.00
*2	Alias Captain Sudden, 13,000 words 130.00	325.00
*3	The Big Day at the Fair, 5,000 words 50.00	136.00
*4	A Crew Divided, 10,000 words 100.00	200.00
5	Canoeing With Cupid, 6,800 words 65.00	100.00
6	East by North for Christmas, 21,500 words 215.00	537.00
*7	Fair Play and No Favor, 12,000 words 120.00	300.00
*8	The Fortunate Mile, 7,000 words 70.00	136.00
*9	Getting the Jump on Jiggson, 5,000 words 50.00	100.00
10	The Gold on the Out-Trail, 33,000 words 3300.00	825.00
11	Miss Paul of St. Paul, 35,000 words 350.00	700.00
12	Around with Horace, 8,000 words 80.00	160.00
**13	The Skylark, 60,000 words 600.00	1200.00
14	Star Witnesses, 23,000 words 23.00	46.00
15	Sky Rancher, 34,000 words 340.00	850.00
16	Star of Allah, 41,000 words 410.00	1020.00
17	The Black Badge of Mystery, 36,000 words 360.00	720.00
*18	Throwing the Hammer for Thammy, 6,500 words _ 65.00	130.00
19	Try It and See, 14,000 words 140.00	280.00
*20	Tangled in Toronto, 32,000 words 320.00	640.00
21	The Upper Hand, 15,500 words 155.00	310.00
*22	The Wrestler and the Diamond, 8,500 words 85.00	170.00
*Judged	to have exhausted their value	

^{**}Picture rights were sold for "Skylark"

It is not known whether these were sold to Street and Smith or other publishers, but presumably Street and Smith purchased many of them.

He wrote for Top--Notch steadily from July 1921 to June 1928, turning out on the average one story or one part of a serial each week. Presumably some of these were Merriwell adventure stories, as Gilbert Patten had ceased writing Merriwell stories for Street and Smith when he became editor of Top-Notch in 1916.17

Title	Date	
Lucky Stranger (in 3 parts)	7-29-8-5-8-12-1921	
Lost Bonanza (in 3 parts)	8-19-8-26-9-2-1921	
The Owl Car to Minerra (in 4 parts)	9-9-9-16-9-23-10-7-1921	
Made to Order (in 3 parts)	10-7-10-14-10-21-1921	
Stepping Some (in 3 parts)	11-4-11-10-11-18-1921	
Scarlet and Gold (in 3 parts)	12-2-12-9-12-16-1921	
Rough Diamonds (in 3 parts)	1-13-1-20-1-27-1922	
A Knight for a Day (in 3 parts)	2-3-2-10-2-17-1922	
The Master Stroke	2-24-1922	

Bravo, Zymo (in 3 parts) 3-10-3-17-3-24-1922 4-21-4-28-5-5-1922 The Raiders (in 3 parts) 5-19-5-26-6-2-1922 Twisted Trails (in 3 parts) The Eyes of Duty (in 3 parts) 7-14-7-21-7-28-1922 House O'Dreams 8-11-1922 8-18-8-25-9-1-1922 The Miracle (in 3 parts) Marooned at MacKellar (in 3 parts) 9-8-9-15-9-22-1922 The Luck Doctor (in 3 parts) 10-13-10-20-10-27-1922 Hitting On All Six (in 3 parts) 11-17-11-24-12-1-1922 A Course of Sprouts (in 3 parts) 1-19-1-26-2-2-1923 The Thunderclap (in 3 parts) 2-9-2-23-3-30-1923 The Master Krot (in 3 parts) 4-13-4-20-4-27-1923 Binney Foots the Bill (in 3 parts) 5-2-6-1-6-8-1923 (Reprinted as "His Billion-to-one Chance" 8-15-1923) The Way of the Desert (in 3 parts) 6-29-7-6-7-13-1923 (Reprinted as "Collo Bill's Revenge" 9-15-1923) Fighting for Fortune (in 4 parts) 7-20-7-27-8-2-8-17-1923 (Reprinted as "Against Big Odds" n.d.) Ned Gordon's Luck (in 3 parts) 8-9-8-24-8-31-1923 The Hired Man (in 3 parts) 9-7-9-14-9-21-1923 Christmas, Personally Conducted (in 3 parts) 9-28-10-5-10-11-1923 Nine Points of the Law (in 3 parts) 11-2-11-9-11-16-1923 The Clean-Up (in 3 parts) 12-14-12-18-1923-1-4-'24 The Regenschirm Development (in 3 parts) 1-25-2-1-2-8-1924 The Prince of Fools (in 3 parts) 2-15-2-21-1924 Anything to Oblige (in 3 parts) 3-14-3-21-3-28-1924 Destiny at the Crossroads (in 3 parts) 4-11-4-18-4-25-1924 The Earthquake (in 3 parts) 5-15-5-23-5-29-1924 The Last Minute of Play (in 3 parts) 7-3-7-11-7-18-1924 The Thirteenth Man (in 3 parts) 8-8-8-15-1924 His Christmas Masquerade (in 3 parts) 8-12-9-19-9-26-1924 Aladdin of Poverty Pass (in 3 parts) 11-21-11-27-12-5-1924 The Waters of Fear (in 3 parts) 1-23-1-30-2-6-1925 Pards (in 3 parts) 2-13-2-20-2-27-1925 Make it Romantic (in 3 parts) 3-6-3-13-3-20-1925 Handsome is as Handsome Does (in 3 parts) 4-3-4-10-4-17-1925 Leave it to Larkins (in 4 parts) 5-1-5-8-5-15-5-21-1925 Till the Last Down (in 2 parts) 7-24-7-31-1925 After Two at Sorrento's (in 3 parts) 8-28 9-4 9-11-1925 The Mislaid Christmas (in 2 parts) 10-2-10-9-1925 Where the Eagles are Gathered (in 2 parts) 11-6-11-13-1925 Plumes of Plunder 12-10-1925 Wings, Paws and A Ten Strike 1-8-1926 East of Sunrise 1-8-1926 Golden Fleece 1-15-1926 The Man From Arizona 1-21-1926 The Valley of Decision 2-5-1926 The Wonder Workers 3-19-1926 The Black Shadow 7-9-1926 Fortune's Touchdown (in 2 parts) 8-13-8-20-1926 Christmas by Proxy 9-17-1926 Phantom Argonaut 2-11-1927 The Blue Mandarin 3-11-1927 The Gadfly 5-20-1927 Port O' Dreams 8-19-1927 Christmas at Crack O' Doom 8-26-1927

The Desert Trap	9-30-1927
The Hole in the Pocket	10-21-1927
Blue Whistlers	11-18-1927
Crossing Out the Double-Cross	1-6-1928
The Sky Pirates	3-23-1928
Branding a Maverick	5-18-1928
Blind Fortune	6-8-1928
Double Trouble	6-22-1928

Street and Smith requested a football story and a Christmas story each year from Cook. Often William Wallace Cook would find as many as three or four of his stories in one magazine issue, some under the Street and Smith nom de plumes, as well as one under his own name.

Cook wrote new stories for the Adventure Library from 1925 to 1927. Thirty-eight were issued semi-monthly for fifteen cents under Cook's own name and were as follows: 18

- *1. The Desert Argonaut
- *2. A Quarter to Four
- *3. Thorndyke of the Bonita
- *4. A Round Trip to the Year 2000
- *5. The Gold Gleaners
- *6. The Spur of Necessity
- *7. The Mysterious Mission
- *8. The Goal of a Million
- *9. Marooned in 1492
- *10. Running the Signal
- *11. His Friend the Enemy
- *12. In the Web
- *13. A Deep Sea Game
- *14. The Paymaster's Special
- *15. Adrift in the Unknown
- *16. Jim Dexter, Cattleman
- *17. Juggling with Liberty
- *18. Back from Bedlam
- 19. A River Tangle
- 20. A Billionaire Pro Tem
- 21. In the Wake of the Scimitar
- 22. His Audacious Highness
- 23. At Daggers Dawn
- 24. The Eighth Wonder
- 25. The Cat's Paw
- 26. The Cotton Bag
- 27. Cast Away at the Pole
- 28. The Testing of Noves
- 29. The Fateful Seventh
- 30. Montana
- 31. The Deserter
- 32. The Sheriff of Broken Bow
- 33. Wanted: A Highwayman
- 34. Frisbie of San Antone
- 35. His Last Dollar
- 36. Fools for Luck
- 37. Dare of Darling & Co.
- 38. Trailing "The Josephine"



William Wallace Cook, about 1927.

The first eighteen (*) were reprints of the New Fiction Series (1910). Issues 19 through 38 were new stories by Cook. After the 38 issue, July 1926, William Wallace Cook shared the Adventure Library with many others, or if he wrote additional stories for the series, they were issued under a Street and Smith company name. Only three stories in the Adventure Library were in Cook's own name after July 1926. They were: #65, "Golden Bighorn"; #71 "The Innocent Outlaw"; and #77, "Rogers of Butte."* In 1925 Chelsea House, a subsidiary publishing house of Street and Smith, brought out William Wallace Cook's fourth hardback book, Around the World in Eighty Hours. In that year he also sold book rights for "The Skylark,"** "Harlequin, Ha," and "As the Sparks Fly Upward." 20

Cook married for the second time in 1926 to Mary A. Ackley, his house-keeper. For some years they spent winters in California, but always returned

to Marshall for the balance of the year.

Cook enjoyed seeing his stories transformed into film. Tom Mix appeared in "After Your Own Heart" and Douglas McLain in "Sunshine Trail." When a Cook story, "Speed Spook" was shown at the Marshall Garden Theater, publicity was given to the film by converting a regular passenger sedan so that from all appearances the driver was invisible. The author was surprised and delighted when the character and car he had created in fiction called at his home on North Kalamazoo Avenue.

Letter from the managinb editor, Charles Agnew MacLean, of Street and Smith in December 1927 asked Cook to again write Merriwell stories, suggesting that Cook "take up Frank Merriwell where you left him off," when Cook wrote the last of these stories "before Tip-Top passed out and changed to a magazine" (1915). McLean added that the stories Cook had done of Frank Merriwell out west and in the mining game were good and suggested that he take him there again.²¹

*"Rogers of Butte" was credited as a William Wallace Cook story when his first book, His Friend the Enemy, was published in 1903.

**It will be noted that "The Skylark" was listed in Cook's inventory to the internal revenue in 1919, and that picture rights for it had been sold earlier.



By this time Cook was deeply immersed in a new venture, a method to suggest plots to other writers of creative fiction. His last book Plotto, A New Method of Plot Suggestion for Writers of Creative Fiction, was published in 1928.²² The author supplied skeleton plots and sub-plots to inspire authors, by which they could further embellish with their own imagination. The book was intended to be accompanied by class instruction that Cook would supply by correspondence. A most ambitious undertaking that failed to receive the extensive response that he anticipated, although letters of inquiry from novice authors brought Cook great satisfaction. Favorable reviews from S. S. McClure were a source of pleasure.²³

Cook had produced five stories for Top-Notch by June 1928, when his health prevented him from continuing. For the last six years of his life his health gradually failed him. His last published story appeared in the local newspaper, The Marshall Evening Chronicle, from March 25 to May 4, 1933.

Three months later his death occurred, July 20, 1933.24

The locale of "Comrades of the Glory Road," was the city of Marshall. The adventures and misadventures of two Civil War veterans provided the action which was skillfully woven into the history, social life, and landscape of Marshall. Cook had written this story for a scenario contest for the Chicago Daily News, winning the \$500.00 prize money. The nostalgic sentimental tale of the two Marshall comrades seemed a fitting end to William Wallace Cook's career and was especially appropriate as a local publication.

The popularity of Cook's adventure stories carried on after his death. Wright and Brown, an English publisher, issued at least 5 of his stories in

book form as late as 1940.

The pulp publishing field experienced rapid changes in the 1930's. Communication technology of the twenties and thirties in the form of the motion picture, and the radio transferred the tales of adventure, desperadoes, cowboys, Indians and lovers to a more dynamic form. The depression provided a further weakening blow.

Some of Cook's old friends in the writing field preceded him in death: Frank Munsey died in 1925; and a colleague of the Buffalo Bill Stories, William Almon Wolff, died in 1933. When two other colleagues, Ormund and George Smith, owners of Street and Smith since the death of their father, Francis S. Smith, in 1887, died, the firm's policy greatly changed. Ormund Smith died in April, 1933, and his brother, George, a fortnight later. With the death of the Smith brothers in 1933, the Street and Smith firm in addition to pulp fiction turned to women's fashion magazines, such as Mademoiselle and Charm, and to science fiction.

FOOTNOTES

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- 3. Edwards, John Milton (W. W. Cook), The Fiction Factory, p. 165.
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 Reynolds, Quentin, The Fiction Factory or From Pulp Row to Quality Street. N. Y., Random House, 1955, p. 108. Edwards, John Milton (W. W.
- 6. Edwards, John Milton (W. W. Cook), The Fiction Factory, p. 99.

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- 11. Cook, William Wallace A Quarter to Four or the Secret of Fortune Island, New Fiction Series, Street and Smith, 1908 (#2 as a reprint in The Adventure Library).
- 12. Conde Nast Publications, Inc., Archives of Street and Smith.
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- 14. These were eventually reprinted in the Far West Library (1907-); next in the Buffalo Bill Border Stories and finally in the Great Western Library (1920-1933).
- 15. Conde Nast Publications, Inc.
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- 17. Conde Nast Publications, Inc.
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- Cook, William Wallace, Around the World In Eighty Hours, N. Y., Chelsea House, 1925.
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- Letter from Charles Agnew MacLean, editor of Top-Notch, December 6, 1927.
- Cook, William Wallace, Plotto, A New Method of Plot Suggestion for Writers of Creative Fiction. Battle Creek, Ellis Publishing Company, 1928.
- Letters from T. T. Flynn, undated [ca. August 1928] and Erle Stanley Gardner, dated August 12, 1939. Undated clipping, Battle Creek Enquirer-News.
- Cook, William Wallace "Comrades of the Glory Road," Marshall Evening Chronicle, March 25, to May 4, 1933. Obituary, Marshall Evening Chronicle, July 20, 1933.

Back numbers Reckless Ralph's Dime Novel Roundup (quite a few reprints, can't be helped). Don't have the complete set of No. 1 to 237 inclusive, but almost, lacking only a few numbers. 10c each or \$21.00 postpaid. Have at least 230 numbers or more. Also two indexes, 1 Pioneer and Scouts of the Old West, Birthday number, War Library list and Dime Novel Catalog.

Ralph F. Cummings 161 Pleasant St., So. Grafton, Mass. 01560

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Displaying One's Collection

Willis Potthoff, a member of the Emerson Electric Company Personnel Office counsels other employees with respect to the need for planning and retirement. He began to "practice" what he was preaching in 1920.

It all started with the need to rebind several out-of-print books written by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Willis first read these novels when he was elementary school age. At that time, the type of story was not exactly approved in the best reading circles.

A lunch table discussion, supplemented by a little-known paperback received from a friend, and a desire to reread all of these books became the basis of a stimulating avocation. Once the desire to locate and reread all of the novels of the creator of Tarzan of the Apes was established, it was very easy to expand the idea to other popular fiction writers.

Book-collecting becomes a kind of a disease. The collector is quickly "obsessed" and will go to any extent to achieve his objective. As the example cited here will bring out.

Under normal circumstances and in most instances the books get stacked or put on shelves, with the collector getting more familiar with their spine (backsides) rather than with their "face," which is where the character is more evident. This is why libraries are so "dull" and stuffy.

But Willis Potthoff has a different approach. Not only does he make the books come alive, he uses them as a form of room decoration, that may be changed with the season, or as interests change.



The Edgar Rice Burroughs books. The Mars titles along with 'Beasts' of Tarzan All photos from the library of Willis J. Potthoff

Special "racks," designed specifically for the space and number of books available, are made up to display books about Indians, Colonial, Revolutionary or Civil War. Special emphasis is put on books with colorful jackets, Leo Edwards, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Wm. Heyliger and Hugh Lloyd.

To avoid fading from exposure to light, the Leo Edwards titles, as well as other books with colorful jackets, are covered when the library is not in use.

Working or reading in this library gives the impression of being surrounded by your favorite "action" characters of years gone by: Phra, The Phoenician, King Arthur, Robin Hood, Eric The Red, Pirates and Buccaneers, Mongols and Saracens, Captains and Cavaliers, Pioneers and Adventurers, Cowboys and Indians and of course John Carter and Tarzan.

It is the kind of a room that will not permit a person to feel alone. Just a glance at any wall will bring back memories of days gone by and conjur

visions of what might have been.

Many of the old Boy's books as well as those of Leo Edwards, Burroughs, Stoddard and Tomlinson are mounted on the racks as illustrated. These "racks" are supplemented by eight conventional shelves for the books of Harold Bell Wright, Zane Grey, James Otis, J. B. Hendryx, Joe Altsheller, Joe Lincoln, Henry Barbour, Hal G. Everts and others.

Books with dust jackets are further protected by clear plastic covers that

protect the book as well as the jacket.

Even though St. Louis is the site of one of the largest and most successful used book sales in the country, as well as many other smaller book fairs, book collectors must depend upon the mail for acquisition of many of their wares. For the most part, the better sources for used books are cast of the Mississippi.

In the course of gathering in all these books Willis has some fundamental axioms that should be observed. However, experience is the best teacher.

Few can learn otherwise.

1) Don't get too chummy with your fellow collectors too soon. Wait until you know more of the "want" and operating policies.



The 30 titles of Leo Edwards plus Andy Black in Advertising.

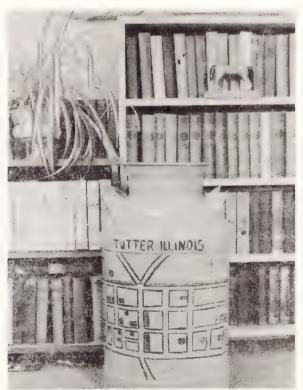
- 2) Always remember, "dealers" are trying to make a "buck." (Which is very difficult in the used-book business.) Collectors are not too concerned about "resale" value.
- 3) In the business of "trading," try to be flexible, don't get too alarmed if you get taken-in. You can expect it once in a while, and don't get too "pee-owed" about it.

We all have different sets of values. I have never been too concerned about 1st editions or autographed copies. The book should be in good enough condition to read and fit into my collection. This "thing" about the covers came after I realized how well they looked when "racked" rather than being put on shelves.

When someone else is tolerant of your "whims," the least you can do is to be tolerant of their eccentricities. This is a two-way street you know. But, so often, we break our acquantance that took many months to develop.

- 4) Don't be in too big a rush to get them all, the search will lose its "zest" as soon as you have gained your objective.
- 5) Do what you can to help the other guy. Send him (or her) some of your extras, it will not break you, and who knows, he could send you a surprise. "Bread cast upon the waters, you know."
 - 6) Advertise, it is the best method of letting your "wants" known.

Willis sent us a "quote" that he believes will be understood by every book collector.



Milk can from Ed Allen's Dairy with map of Tutter, Illinois.

"A day of almost continuous rain, yet for me a day of delight. I had breakfast, and was poring over the map of Devon (how I love a good map!) to trace an expedition that I had in view, when a knock came at my door, and Mrs. M. bore in a great brown paper parcel, which I saw at a glance must contain books. The order was sent to London a few days ago; I had not expected to have my books so soon. With throbbing heart I set the parcel on a clear table; eyed it whilst I mended the fire; then took my pen-knife, and gravely, deliberately, though with hand that trembled, began to unpack.

"It is a joy to go through booksellers' catalogues, ticking here and there a possible purchase. Formerly, when I could seldom spare money, I kept catalogues as much as possible out of sight; now I savour them page by page, and make a pleasant virtue of the discretion I must impose upon myself. But greater still is the happiness of unpacking volumes which one has bought without seeing them. The first glimpse of bindings when the inmost protective wrapper has been folded back! The first scent of books! The first gleam of a gilded title! Here is a work the name of which has been known to me for half a lifetime, but which I never yet saw; I take it revently in my hand, gently I open it; my eyes are dim with excitement as I glance over chapter-headings, and anticipate the treat which awaits me."

—George Gissing (1857-1903) in "The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft"

Willis also feels that this is a kind of a "fun" thing and to get the most out of it, you must want to share it with others. He asks, "What do you do when you have all the books you are searching for?" "What do you do for an "Encore?" He knows of a fellow collector in St. Louis who gathered in all of the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs, sold them and then started over.

Further to really get the "feel" of the books you collect, you must read them, if not all at least some of the authors you collect. Willis feels that this makes the collection more meaningful. Reading our favorite books is a form of "escape." We are transported into another world. We gain new friends and experience, new forms of excitement.

To get a new insight into the power of books, read the two famous classics of Christopher Morley: PARNASSUS ON WHEELS and its sequel, THE HAUNTED BOOKSHOP. You will be wiser for it and your book collection will mean more to you.

Books are very symbolic of the period in which they were written. Fiction as well as non-fiction will give the reader a feel for the tempo and attitude of the times to a greater degree than anything else. Books are researched, everything is done to make the story authentic.

Who would deny Charles Dickens? How else would we have learned about old England. Horatio Alger, Jr. has left an impression that will last as long as books are read. Joe Lincoln and Joe Altsheller have each done their part to preserve a period that is part of our heritage.

Willis believes that in this year of the Bicentennial, it would be most appropriate for us to regain some of the patriotism that is so evident in the works of James Otis, Everett Tomlinson, Charles Coffin, Edward S. Ellis and Joe Altsheller.

Yes, and those who are writing books today could do well to read the works of Leo Edwards (Edward Edson Lee) to learn that books could be written that did not have sex, violence, murder and dope to be of interest to our youth.

Optics Serials As Books

By J. R. Chenu

I would like to add a bit to S. E. Wa'len's fine article on Optic which was concluded in the May 1975 issue of The Roundup. There is a reference at the bottom of page 41 to a statement by Jack Dizer that "17 serials which had appeared only in Golden Days magazine were published in book form in 1912."

There were 17 serials which were printed as books which had appeared in Golden Days and GOLDEN ARGOSY. They were published in paperback by Street & Smith as a part of their Alger Series, and were also published in hardcover by Lothrop Lee and Shepard.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

Louis Chiswick's Mission

The Cruise Of The Dandy

Three Young Silver Kings

The Professor's Son

Building Himself Up

Lyon Hart's Heroism

16. Making A Man Of Himself

The Young Hermit

The seventeen titles are:

- 1. Among The Missing
- 2. His Own Helper
- 3. Honest Kit Dunstable
- 4. Every Inch A Boy 5. The Young Pilot
- 6. Always In Luck
- 7. Royal Tarr's Pluck
- Prisoners Of The Cave

17. Striving For His Own The effect of this is to revise Mr. Wallen's summary on page 46 so that shows 122 books and 1 serial.

The one serial which I can find no evidence of in book form is titled "Lost-On Island."

There is a serial entitled "That Dillingham Boy" by Optic in the American Boy running from November 1907 through February of 1909. We have this after his death. It is not mentioned in the summary and American Boy is an unlikely spot to find him, so I will make mention of it. I have been as yet unable to equate the story with any of the books.

NEWS NOTES

George A. Urban, a long time member of the Happy Hour Brotherhood has come down with an eye disease that no longer allows him to read. After so many years a dime novel collector and reader, I can think of no greater affliction.

Bill Favreau of 110 Nevada Ave., Wilmington, Del. 19803 needs Baseball Joe, Captain of the Team to complete his set. Anyone can help him by quoting him a copy at reasonable prices?

Frank Acker writes to point out that the SPORTS ILLUSTRATED issue mentioned as for Sept. 3, 1975 is incorrect. That date was the date the article was received. Can anyone identify the correct issue of SPORTS ILLUSTRAT-

Miss Louise Harris of 15 Jay St., Rumford, R. I. 02916 is very much interested in obtaining Flag of Our Union for 1870 and Volume II of St. Nicholas, also Ballou's Monthly for 1873. Can anyone quote these items to her?

Dr. Glenn C. Brown points out that Norman Rockwell illustrated a number of Henry Barbour books. Among those identified are the following: The Lucky Seventh, The Secret Play, The Purple Pennant and Hitting the Line, published by Appleton during 1915-1917.

The Current Company of P. O. Box 46, Bristol, R. I. 02809 has recently advertised Tom Swift books at \$8.50 for "hinge looseness" copies to \$19.75 for "fine" copies.



Dear Eddie:

In going over your Happy Days Bibliographical Listing, I was somewhat puzzled by the attribution of the Harvey K. Ford stories to H. K. Shackleford. HKS died in 1905, or it might have been 1906—I would have to look up the date, which is given in one of "Answers to Correspondents" columns. Anyway, the first Harvey K. Ford appeared in #610, June 23, 1906. Then came an HKS, #612, July 7, 1906. That was the last original HKS story published. Thereafter, it was Harvey K. Ford except for the reprints. I think that Tousey picked on Harvey K. Ford as a house name for Wall Street and success stories because of its similarity to H. K. Shackleford, who was identified in readers' minds with that type of story, and thus might lead them to think that the stories they were reading were still by the same author.

Ross Craufurd

Thanks for the correction. I made the same assumption that the readers of Happy Days made. Note: A bibliographic listing of Happy Days was published a few years ago by the ditto reproduction process. It was quickly sold out and is now out of print.

Dear Editor LeBlanc:

I note in the sample D. N. R. (October 1975, p. 121) that there is doubt that William Wallace Cook wrote Merriwell stories. A copy of the McLear letter cited in my article is enclosed. Further, there is a real tradition from the older residents in Marshall that Cook wrote Merriwell stories, thus my conviction that he did is based on these sources.

Sincerely, Mabel R. Skjelver, Ph.D.

STREET & SMITH CORPORATION — PUBLISHERS New York

Mr. William Wallace Cook, Marshall, Michigan Dear Cook:

December 6, 1927

Mr. G. C. Smith has suggested to me that I write you urging you to do a series of Merriwell stories for Top-Notch. They will appear under the pen name of Burt L. Standish which is our property. They will be of about 25,000 words in length and we could use one a month or more. Perhaps they could run to 30,000 words. They would be, more or less, a continuation of the old Top-Notch stories. Mr. Smith is very anxious for you to consider this as we want to continue this series for a considerable period and, if possible, we want it to be the work of one hand.

Patten is no longer writing for us. We have the right to continue this series. That is understood between us. It is also understood that the book rights of these stories will belong to us. I hope that this suggestion strikes you favorably,

Mr. Smith wants me to send you his regards and to say that he hopes you had a pleasant trip abroad. I join him in both these sentiments.

How is Plotto going? I am still interested in him. Hoping to hear from you soon and with best regards.

ou soon and with best regards.

Very truly yours.

Charles Agnew MacLean, Managing Editor

THE POPULAR MAGAZINE 79-89 Seventh Avenue — New York

Mr. William Wallace Cook Marshall, Michigan December 29, 1927

Dear Mr. Cook:

I was glad to hear from you about the Merriwell stories. By this time I think you have had a file of them shipped out to you, and as you wrote them for a number of years, it won't be so hard for you. I don't think either that it will be any particular financial loss. We want one a month of 30,000 words. That gives you \$900.00. In the old days it was about \$75.00, I think, for almost the same length. And remember, once you get the Merriwells going, it will be easier to keep on with them than if you keep hammering out original stories. I would take up Frank Merriwell where you left him off. You wrote about the last of them that were published before Tip Top passed out and changed to a magazine. I would forget the element of time, that is, about their ageing. Of course, in Sport Stories Patten did one about Frank Merriwell, Jr. who was quite a lad at school, but I don't think that makes any difference. Frank Merriwell, of course, is grown up, but he can act as adventurously as anyone else.

I am enclosing a letter we received from a reader of Sport Story. It will interest you, I think. The suggestions are all good. I want to cooperate with you in every way possible in these new Merriwell stories. I will send you a hundred word letter on Plotto within a day or so.

Yours very truly,

Charles Agnew MacLean, Managing Editor The stories you did of Frank Merriwell out west and in the mining game were good. Why not take him there again?

Dear Eddie:

I have just received the February 1976 DIME NOVEL ROUNDUP. This was the best history of dime and nickel novels about Frank and Jesse James that I have ever seen in print and have ever read with such pleasure.

I'll place this issue in my large "outlaw" chest for safekeeping. I also have enjoyed reading the two thick supplements about Nick Carter dime novels.

I felt sorry to read about the death of Charles Bragin. He was one of our old pards.

Sincerely.

Buckskin Bill Randolph, 2316 Jefferson Ave., Davenport, Iowa 52803

SAD NEWS NOTE

Mr. Charles L. Messecar passed away on January 24, 1976. Charlie and I visited together a number of times. He was an enthusiastic boys book collector and was attempting to complete a set of the Boys Own Library published by McKay. He donated a complete set of the American Boy to the University of Minnesota Library and on that occasion I visited Minneapolis and we both had a great time reviewing their great dime novel collection. He will be sorely missed in the circle of boys' book collectors.

Recently Published Articles Concerning Dime Novels

JACK BALES EXPERT ON HORATIO ALGER. Article resulting from interview with Jack appearing in the Woodford County Journal, Eureka, Ill., Dec. 18, 1975.

THE BOY ALLIES, by Larry Siegel. PLAYBOY, date unknown. A

tongue in cheek article about the Boy Allies and World War I.

The Guide to Illinois Literary Resources by Robert Downs, published by the American Library Association in 1974 states that Northern Illinois University has the Johannsen Collection. Jack Bales sent in this information which clears up the mystery of the whereabouts of the collection amassed by Prof. Johannsen in the course of his compilation of the "House of Beadle and Adams." Great work, Jack.

THE PIEGAN STORYTELLER, edited by David C. Andrews, Box 53, Andes, New York 13731, has been distributed to the charter members. It is devoted to the works of James Willard Schultz and deserves support. Sub-

scription price is \$4.00 per year for 4 quarterly issues.

Membership Changes

- 354. Prof. Mabel R. Skjelver, 1631 North 61st St., Lincoln, Nebr. 68505 (New)
- 355. Frances Spitz, 1430 Magnolia, Glenview, Ill. 60026 (New member)
- 356. Ben Jason, 3971 East 71st St., Cleveland, Ohio 44105 (New member)
- 101. L. Harding, 101 Pitt St., Portland, Maine 04103 (New address)
- 357. Walker Martin, 432 Latona Ave., Trenton, N. J. 08618 (New member)
- 24. Alfred A. Hupfield, 5965 South Cuba Court, St. Louis, Mo. 63139 (Correction of error in membership listing)
- 358. Richard Bright, 35 E. Montgomery St., Allentown, Pa. 18103 (New mem.
- 359. Vernon Tyner, 11 Maple Ave., Avoca, New York 14809 (Former mem.)
- 283. J. N. Pettit, 530 W. Berry St., Ft. Wayne, Ind. 46802 (Correction of listing error)
- 138. Andrew Zerbe, P. O. Box 6004, Montgomery, Alabama (New address)
- 360. Library, Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass. 02154 (New member)
- 361. Terry Klasew, 7400 Augusta Ave., Normandy, Mo. 63121 (New member)
- 314. John R. Ruckel, 1355 Roanoke Ave., Riverhead, N. Y. 11901 (New add.) 362. Michael Hollander, P. O. Box 3678, San Rafael, Calif. 94902 (New mem.

Questions and Answers

Q. Louis Bodnar, Jr. wanted to know the sub-title of "The Telegraph Boy" by Edward S. Ellis. Maurice Owen comes through with "The Straight Road to Success."

Let's have a few more questions to keep the column going.

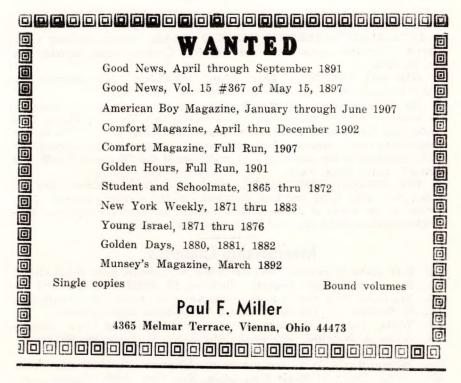
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Stratemeyer: Shorthand Tom, The Reporter, Defending His Flag, Under Scott

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Bowery Boy Library	2.00	Pluck and Luck #300 up	2.00
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ALLAN R. WARE

818 West 20th St. Pine Bluff, Ark. 71601

By F. W. Dixon